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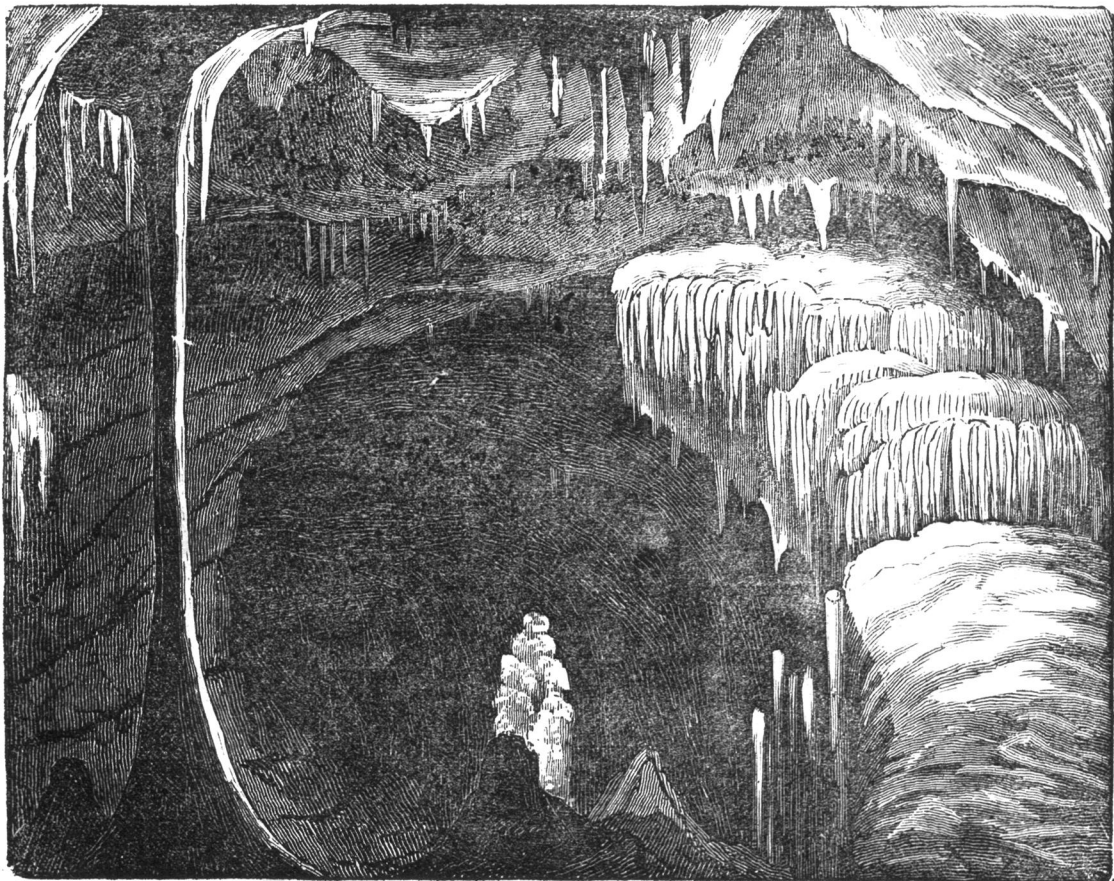
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with a view of preventing the descent of any but those who, by the payment of a small fee, acquire the right of visiting his subterranean wonders. Upon getting within the grating, a narrow passage of about four feet in height and thirty-three in length, and sloping at an angle of about 30° with the horizon, terminates in an almost vertical precipice, fifteen feet in depth, down which the visitor passes by means of a ladder. Advancing forward from the foot of the ladder the floor resumes its original angle of inclination, which it maintains for the distance of about twenty-eight feet. It now becomes nearly horizontal, and continues so for 242 feet, or until the opening into the lower middle cave is reached. The bearing, however, of this passage, which was hitherto due south, becomes, at 150 feet from the mouth of the middle cave, south east. The height of the entrance varies a good deal, the limits being from three to seventeen feet; its average breadth from the ladder to the point where the bearing takes a more easterly direction, is about nine, and from this point to the entrance of the cave, twenty-seven feet. The floor,

from the foot of the ladder forwards, is everywhere strewn with blocks of limestone; and the roof, which is very irregular, exhibits scarcely any sparry productions.

The lower middle cave, at which we have now arrived, is one of very considerable magnitude. In shape its ground plan resembles a mattress or bottle with cylindric neck and globular bottom, the diameter of the latter being ninety-five, and the length and diameter of the former seventy-two and forty-two feet respectively. The vertical section of its wider end is that of a dome or hemisphere, the apex of which has an elevation above its base of thirty-five feet. Stalactites of a small size depend from the roof, and a sheeting of sparry matter is observable all along the joints of the limestone, and covers beneath many parts of the floor, where it is usually superimposed upon a very fine red clay, which would appear to have been washed down by water filtering from above before the interstices of the arch were sufficiently closed by calcareous incrustations. The floor of this cave is strewn with large tetrahedral blocks of limestone.



Nichol, del.

THE CROWN CAVERN.

Clayton, sc.

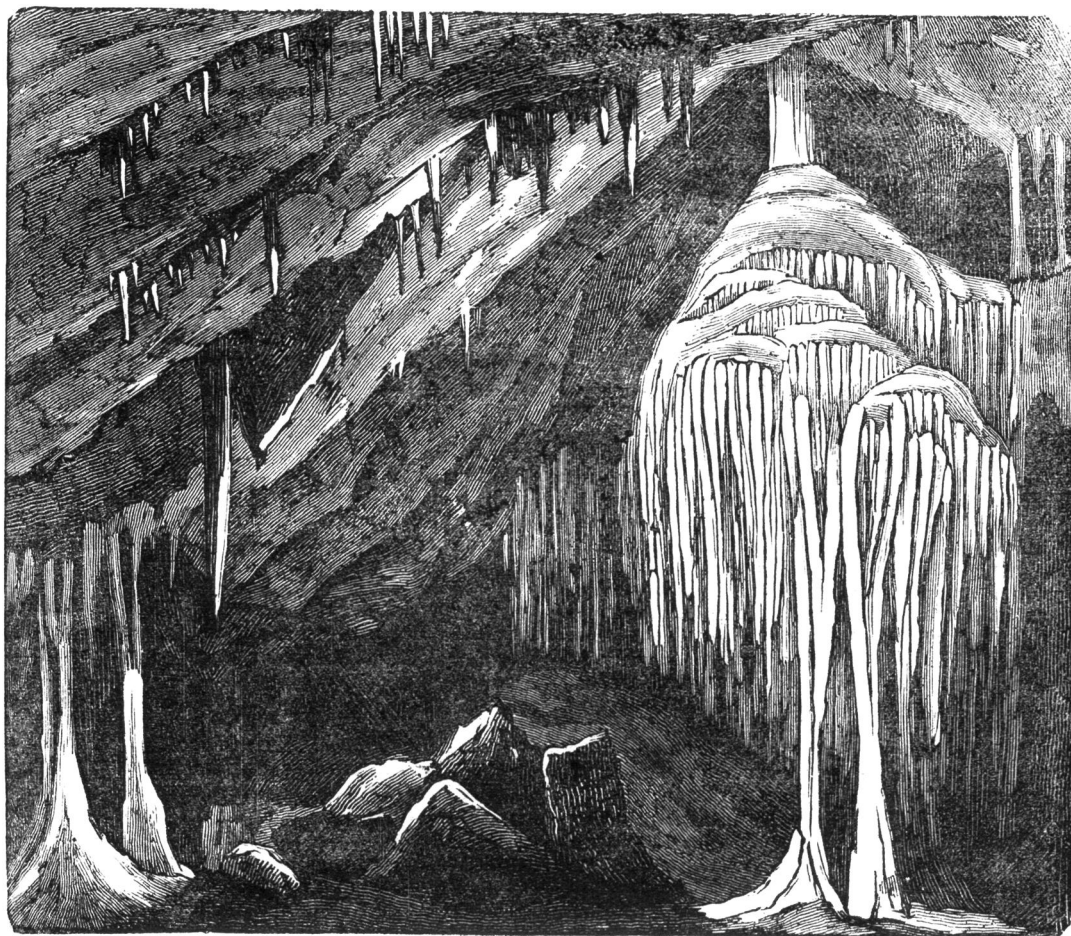
From the southern extremity of the chamber just described, a passage, varying in height from five to ten, and in breadth from seven to fourteen feet, and sixty feet in length, leads to one of somewhat greater magnitude, and of much greater interest, which is known under the name of the upper middle cave. The horizontal section of this natural excavation may, neglecting its irregularities, be considered as a semiellipse, the axes of which are respectively 180 and 80 feet, the major pointing directly east and west. A vertical view or section, corresponding to the line connecting the northern extremity of the minor and eastern extremity of the major axis, shows the roof nearly horizontal, and raised twenty feet above the floor.

This is the most remarkable part of the entire cavern, for the magnitude, beauty, and varied and fantastic appearances of its sparry productions. Immediately upon entering the cave, on the right hand, and attached to the

wall, is found the organ—a huge calcareous growth, which is conceived to bear some resemblance in shape to the musical instrument from which its name is borrowed. Nine great pillars of carbonate of lime occur in this same compartment, rising from the floor to the ceiling; of these the lower third is usually of great diameter, and very irregular in form, while the remaining, or upper portion, usually exhibits the shape of an inverted cone, the base of which is in the ceiling, while the vertex is in connexion with the lower portion of the pillar. In some instances I observed, (but am not sure that it was in this part of the cavern,) that the upper cone had not come in contact with the stalagmite below, though, should the calcareous deposition proceed as heretofore, there can be no doubt that such junction will be finally achieved. The most remarkable pillars in this cave are those known among the guides under the names of *Drum* and *Pyramid*,

the former of which occurs fifteen feet south of the organ; the latter at the eastern end of the chamber. The base of the former is not simple, but composed of stalks cemented together, and having leaved or foliated edges; some of these edges are of great extent and thinness, and when struck gently, vibrate so as to produce an agreeable sound. The pyramid, a pillar fourteen feet in height, rests upon a base of great dimensions, and its shaft is distinguished by the circumstance of its tapering upwards towards the ceiling. The other pillars are of inferior size, but some of them possess a symmetry and beauty superior to those just described. In addition to

the pillars, stalactites and stalagmites every where abound; the former depending from the roof, the latter springing from the floor of the cavern. They are of every length, from an inch to three or four feet; and they, or rather the greater number of them, together with the pillars, usually correspond in position to the vertical joints of the limestone beds composing the roof of the chamber. Before leaving this part of the cavern, I should not omit to mention, that S. S. W. from the *Pyramid*, and at the distance of twenty feet, there is a rectangular sparry production, raised some feet above the floor, to which, from its shape, the name of *Table* has been applied.



Néaol, del.

Clayton, sc.

THE FOUR COURTS.

From the upper middle cave there are two exits beside that already mentioned, one of which takes an easterly, the other a southerly direction. The former, which augments gradually from four to fifteen feet in breadth, terminates at the distance of 110 feet, in a *cul de sac*; but about twenty feet from this extremity, there is sent off, in a northern direction, an arm which conducts to the cellar cave, and what is called the *River*. When visited by us, this *river*, which is very difficult of access, appeared to be but a stagnant pool; (or, if the water is ever in motion, such phenomenon was not at the time to be observed;) in the winter season, however, there can be little doubt, as shall be hereafter shown, that this, as well as several other parts of the cavern, is subjected to the action of running water.

The southern exit conducts, by a steep and rugged passage, about fifty feet in length, first ascending, then descending, to what is called the *long cave*—a designation calculated to convey erroneous notions respecting the nature of this part of the cavern. In point of fact, it consists of several galleries, two of which pursue an E. N. E. and W. S. W. direction, and are intersected by several others at an angle of about 105°, or as nearly as possible that of

the primitive crystal of carbonate of lime. The east and west galleries average a width of about fourteen feet, and have, the one a length of 190, the other of about 350 feet. Of the cross galleries, which are all exactly parallel to each other, and have a direction N. N. W. and S. S. E.; the largest is that which faces the entrance from the upper middle cave, and may be considered a prolongation of it; its breadth is fourteen, and its length about 140 feet. The second possesses the same length, but its continuity is interrupted, the entire of the intervals between the lanes it intersects not being traversed by it. It extends somewhat further south, and sends off to the west two branches of about thirty-eight feet in length. Two other galleries, having the same direction with these, are so small, that by the careless observer they may be considered as fissures, and they are so marked upon the map. Throughout the entire of these passages, the fine red clay already described as occurring in the lower middle cave, is very abundant, and in many places is sheeted over with thin spar. Calcareous concretions of other kinds also occur, but not in such quantity, or of such beauty, as in the upper middle cave. From this statement, however, I should except the eastern extremity of the largest